

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

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Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

Investment in green infrastructure and environmentally sustainable energy, transportation, agribusiness, pharmaceuticals and ecosystem services as well as the traditional revenue generators for the Canadian economy as that is where we will create future competitive advantages, expand the green economy, build in future affordable energy opportunities and reduce our impact on the environment both in Canada and globally. This will help Canada secure independent 3rd party certification for our products and practices and make our exports desirable to our clients and give us a competitive advantage in the market place.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

Encouraging other countries to improve their standard of living and improve human rights at the individual level will only slightly shrink the advantage of the massive amounts of far cheaper labour available to foreign competitor. Canada cannot compete with the cheap labour advantage, even by importing labour, but we can compete with science, invention, and reducing the costs of sustainable earth friendlier practices and products as the world does need these. Developing nations will want this from Canada. . Having sound sustainable policies guiding Canada regarding the development and exporting of the raw materials the developing world wants for their cheaper labour manufacturing is critical to Canada long-term prosperity. We will no longer be manufacturing for export, maybe for domestic and specialty markets. Eventually the fastest growing economies in the world will be resourcing raw materials from markets closer to themselves and not from Canada. For example Russia wants to sell China and India their oil and natural gas from the new ice free Arctic waters, and will be able to do so in competition with Canada. What advantages do we have: educated population, postindustrial society, specialty resources (rare earth minerals) and a pressing economic need to innovation, rather than manufacture. Do not deregulate our banking industries, continue to keep interest rates low, encourage consumers to reduce debt, make us a cash rich nation ready to buy sustainable capital purchases -products and investment vehicles: When times are tough- the smart buy and when times are good the smart save. Canada should as a nation too.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

Reduce the cost for quality secondary and post-secondary education, training and skills development for Canadians. Increase the desired skills of Canadians. Immigrants that work in Canada need to be able to pass Canadian professional association and skill standards testing and certification processes.

Protect the Canadian health system at any costs. Health care for an aging population that has a good quality for life is a good investment in human society and capacity-knowledge transfer family structure , we also need to include hospice care as the preferred alternative to help families with terminally ill or when complete loss of quality of life has passed. Extend life not dying. Increase Canadians contributions to Canada Pension Plan and make it THE pension plan for all in Canada, where it pays enough for an individual to live after retirement, and abandon the RRSP with . individuals acting in the stock market and mutual funds markets. If the investment in RRSPs had been made into CPP no one in Canada would be concerned about retirement, the wealthy would still have a richer retirement, but the poverty of the elderly would not be a fear or reality for many. RRSPs are making many people, banks, investment houses, stock promoters wealthy, but not many Canadians. Individuals in the stock market have severed the real value of a company from the value of the stock, many times there is no longer a relationship between the two.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

Lower the cost for Canadian for skills development; lower the cost for trades and professional education or training. Immigration will never give Canada the competitive labour market advantage of China, India, Brazil, Philippine's and so on. Canada has to develop specialty high level skills that inform and are marketable to the mass labour markets. We need to develop a tax system that taxes the wealth generated by creative, innovative, smaller business, as well as the individuals gaining wealth by this. For now continue to tax resource extraction, and at the same time develop tax system that fairly taxes green infrastructure, renewal energy, smart ideas as the new sustainable economy. Canadians value our social programs, hold them in high esteem, it is our desire to help others and we don't mind paying. However, the middle class cannot carry the burden, just want everyone to pay the same portion of disposable income and acquired wealth for the common good and to protect the common environment. I also feel the benefits from natural resource use should accrue to the people and societies harmed or displace by its development - in particular First Nations and historic Canadian communities .

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

First Nations are facing significant challenges and enormous pressures. They are being pressured to agree to development in their territories and are being offered huge sums of cash compensation , however the harm from the industrial development could alienate them from their ancestral lands and how they live on those lands. In some cases they have to choose between abject poverty but living where and close-ish to how they have for 8-10,000 years and short term-20-50 year cash. When you have had land sustain you for 8-10,000 years, a 20 year promise of Colonial wealth just isn't good enough. The Government needs to put serious thought, resources and ethics into how the Federal Government will response to the needs and support FN in through this and the next century. Start with a 200 year plan. The government AND FN will need to grow public understanding of this. The Attawapiskat issue this winter gave me many, many sad moments thinking of the breakdown within the FN community that resulted in the prioritization of funds that allowed this to happen and the government not being aware or worse being complicit in this. I was deeply distressed. I fear the same plight for the environment that I fear for FN from government not being aware of harm/avoidable impact or worse again, being complicit.

